



21st Century Strategies, Inc.

**Executive Summary
For
St. James UMC
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SECTION TWO
PRIORITY COMMENTS

Keep in mind that the issue before you is not church health or church growth. The issue is what does it mean to be a faithful church? A faithful church is one that is intentionally seeking to carry out the Great Commission of “making disciples of all nations.” To be faithful means that St. James is doing everything that it can to win people for Jesus Christ. A faithful church is one that is intentionally seeking to be salt, light, and leaven in the world, both at home and abroad.

Please note that we have consulted with more than 1,000 churches so we are giving you the best of our experience. What you will find within is what you taught me while I was with you and in the information you supplied me in the Complete Ministry Audit prior to my arrival.

St. James is one of the largest and strongest churches in United Methodism. You are blessed with many wonderful ministries. If you wish to see the strengths and areas that need improvement see the full document

The Importance of Worship

Over the past ten years your worship attendance has more than doubled and it continues to climb. Over the next ten years St. James has the potential to double in size again if it makes some wise choices today.

This growth in worship is significant because everything that happens in a church depends on what is happening in worship. As goes worship, so goes the church. Worship attendance is your bread and butter. It is the leverage for everything else you do. As worship increases so do your many ministries.

Parking is one of the key ingredients of worship in a suburban church.

Therefore, you will hear me keep coming back to the worship issue over and over. Based on past performance you could be totally out of worship space in the next two to three years. This is good news if you act now. It is bad news if you procrastinate and do not focus on the issue now. **Any new money you spend should be on securing more parking space and staffing to disciple more people. This needs to be your number one focus.**

Order of Spending Money

There is a hierarchy of how money is spent in thriving churches.

- Worship space
 - Parking space
 - Lobby space
- Children’s space
- Adult formation
- Youth formation

In other words you should take care of every need of worship before directing money in any other direction. That way you have a better change to have the leverage to do the other ministries.

Clearly, St. James is several issues that must be addressed or St. James will lose its momentum and run the risk of becoming a warehouse of church members failing to reach their potential in Christ.

Four challenges to your future:

- Space. You can do something about this negative.
- Understaffed. You can do something about this negative.
- Children's space. You can do something about this negative.
- Organizational structure. You can do something about this negative.

St. James is out of room and over the 80% maximum capacity in many areas of ministry. Parking, Nursery, children, and lobby space are the key areas that need attention. As you address these issues keep in mind that worship is the primary bread and butter. Educational space never pays for itself, but worship not only pays for itself but also for everything else. There is an old axiom, "If you can't park them, you can't preach to them."

It is next to impossible to sustain growth beyond the comfort level of 80%. This applies to everything the church does. The 80% rule is an invisible, but powerful presence that works like the law of gravity. No one will tell you they are not coming back because the sanctuary, nursery, parking lot, Sunday school class is more than 80% full. In fact, no one really notices that the space is 80% full. It just feels uncomfortable.

The number of pastoral/program staff is consistent with a church of around 650 to 700 in worship. Staffing is a relational issue. One staff person can know and relate to about 100 people at a time. That means of the 900 who should up on Sunday your staff only knows about 650-700 of them. When you consider that in a church with your worship size you have between 1500 and 1800 different people in worship over a four week period. That's because very few people attend now every Sunday. You really have more than thousand people that your staff doesn't know. If they don't know them, the odds are they don't know six or seven people in the church. If they don't know that many people with 90 days the odds are they become inactive even though they have been through the membership class.

Your children's ministry is way too small for a church your size. One of the reasons is it is chaos on Sunday morning due to the small hallways and the configuration of the facilities.

You are one of the few UMCs that still have the old form of organization – Church Council and Administrative Board. This structure ties up too many key lay people with attending meetings rather than being in ministry. People have just so much time to give.

The Good and Not So Good News

The good news is that St. James is so healthy it does not need radical surgery. The bad news is that it does need fine tuning which usually costs more than radical surgery. Most of the issues facing you will require money.

The Barrier Facing St. James

Your worship attendance is approaching a natural growth barrier – 1,000 in worship. Even though this is an arbitrary barrier nevertheless history has shown that to go through it there are certain things that always occur and certain actions that are essential.

All churches over 1,000 in worship are faced with the same issue for the rest of their growing life:

- Space issues
- Staff issues
- A wide back door

I. Within the next three months decide how you are going to solve your space issues.

You must not procrastinate on this issue. If you begin now it will be two to three years before you have any kind of adequate solution to many of your space issues.

You would do well to charge your Joel Team to begin work on this report NOW. Somewhere along the way have a couple of Town Hall Meetings where you share the Joel Teams response to this Report and by the end of August have a vote on whichever recommendations the come out of the Joel Team. Every month you delay deciding just puts you that much further behind.

A. The fall of 2009, hire a church construction/design firm to develop a master plan.

Design firms are preferred over an architect because they are familiar with working with churches and understand their needs which most architects don't. You will save money and have a better master plan going this way.

1. January 2010 hire a capital fund consultant and conduct a capital fund drive Sept 2010. In a normal economy you can usually raise two to three times you budget over a three year period.

B. Over the next two years add 250 spaces as you are able.

You are 156 spaces short now. Keep in mind that each space is worth \$3586 annually. And from what I gathered while with you your last parking lot cost you about \$1,000 a space. I arrive at this amount by dividing your average worship attendance into your budget and multiplying it by two because most people come to your church two per car.

1. Consider using the grassy area in front of the sanctuary for the physically challenged and perhaps visitors. I know the grass looks nice but it is a long walk from your handicapped spaces to the sanctuary.
2. By Sept, 2009, put a parking lot sign across 6th street
3. Before October, 2009 add ten visible first time visitors' parking spaces with directional signs.
4. By August 2009, develop a parking lot team with walki-talkies.

C. Jan. 2011 build a children's wing designed around newer models of childhood learning.

1. Include a Nursery in this building. You may want to keep the present Nursery for people who go to the traditional service.
2. Should you decide to expand the preschool it could help pay for the building.
3. Your second best option is to see if you can knock out some walls in the children's area to make room for a larger venue.
4. Third best option seal off the old sanctuary

D. Beginning next week begin bringing your Nursery up to standards so it is appealing to children and parents.

1. Before Sept 2009, separate the crib and crawlers from the walkers. I heard more complaints about this issue than I did the lack of parking.
2. Next week seal the Nursery door/s leading to the outside. You can't afford letting people you don't know come into the children's area without signing in.
3. I don't remember if you have pagers or not, but fast growing churches with many visitors may want to provide pagers so parents can be reached if needed. These same churches may want to ask the parent who leaves the child to also leave a drivers license for identification when returning. Another spouse should not be able to pick up the child because of the possibility of non-custodial kidnapping
4. Add enough cribs for every infant who is held. I didn't see one crib in the Nursery. No wonder parents bring their little ones to worship.
5. Before Sept 2009, develop a sign-in method to insure the right person picks up the child. There are many software programs to help you do this. See the Nursery workbook I attached to this report.

E. Solving your worship space over the long term will be a challenge.

1. Sept. 2009, develop a choir for 8:45 worship. I know you have a small ensemble at this service but that is not the same as a full choir that produces as good music as the eleven o'clock service. Adding this choir will help you increase that service and will alleviate the crowded 11:00 choir because some will switch to that service.
2. By Sept. 2009 put two portable coffee carts on the outside of the Christian Ministry Center to say "stay awhile and meet some friends."
3. By Sept. have an off-duty policeman for 6th street. This will not only help both parents with children and the elderly it will also say to the public that something is happening at St. James and even if it is crowded we are making it safe for people.
4. By Sept. place signs throughout the building showing worship and Nursery. Depending on where you enter the building it is impossible to know where the Nursery is located.
5. At every service make sure people know how to become part of the family of faith at St. James as well as to register a decision for Christ.
6. Welcome your guests in a prominent position in your bulletin, but do not single out visitors in worship. Design your bulletin so it is directed at first-time visitors rather than the members who already know their way around. The bulletin should offer a wide range of information to help first-time visitors get to know the church.
7. Consider changing you Sunday morning schedule.

At the moment you are building the schedule around 175 people in S.S. I wonder if this is the best way to schedule since worship is the bread and butter of everything else. Your schedule is even more questionable because the adult classes have around 30-40 minutes of class time. Also when a visitor arrives at 9:00 and worships and then tries to find a class the class is almost over.

I showed you the complicated schedule one of the nights. The copy is too blurred to put in this report but your office has a very clear copy of it.

You may want to go to one of the following two schedules.

8:30	9:45	11:00	11:11
	S.S.		
8:30	9:45	11:00	11:11
	S.S.	S.S	-----

F. Improve the 9:00 service.

1. Stop referring to 9:00 as "Praise service" because it is beyond praise and will give the wrong impression to people who are in the know. Just call it "connexion service."
2. By Easter, put the children's faces during children's moments on screen. This will allow people to see them and will increase the importance of the time for both the children and the congregation.
3. Alan needs to play during children coming up and leaving. Doing so will take away the dead feeling during that time which is one of the deadliest sins of this type of service.
4. Build or purchase a real information booth for visitors and no one was behind the one you have. There should be two people at all times until at least 15 minutes into the service.
5. Put the sermon points on the screen. It's not good in a service like Connexion for the screens to ever be blank. That's like your TV going black.
6. It would be good to emphasize registration by being a bit more intentional and giving them a little longer to fill it out. I'm not sure when you would do this but it needs more time and emphasis than you gave it.
7. Improve the ending by asking people to do something with the message or bring a friend or receive Christ. After a moving service a mere benediction left me feeling incomplete.
8. By Sept 2010 develop four Connexion worship teams so that no one group needs to sing more than once a quarter for a month.
9. I was not able to neither understand nor hear a word in the opening song. As the service progressed the mixture of words and music got much better and I could hear. This improvement of sound suggests whoever is doing the sound needs to work out the settings prior to the service.

G. Improve the 11:00 service.

1. There were two bad dead spots during the service. One when the children were coming up and the other when the choir was spreading out. It would be good for the organist to play while this is happening.
2. The sanctuary is very dark and could use some better lighting especially for those who are beginning to have trouble seeing clearly.
3. If you don't pave the grassy area, put a sidewalk across the grass to 6th street. I saw several elderly couples walking across the grass to save steps and were having a hard time.
4. The back pews don't have book or card racks.
5. The choir is excellent but I couldn't understand a word. It may have been that I was setting in the back. The sound was beautiful but the words weren't clear.
6. Consider remodeling the sanctuary to put the choir in the center where they

can be seen and heard. The altar is beautiful but it gives the church a cold impression. Having the choir up front would give it a warmer feeling and would allow the choir to have an even better sound.

II. Over the Next Two Years, Add the Equivalent of Two Full-time Program Staff and One Support Staff

The scores on your lead pastor are basically good. Your leadership feels as if you have a good match. This is crucial in a church this size.

The rule of thumb for the appropriate number of program staff in a traditional program based church like St. James is the equivalent of one program staff for every one hundred to one hundred twenty-five people in worship.

A. By January 2010, hire a fulltime Business Manager.

This person is responsible for Finance, Trustees, Maintenance, and Office Personnel. This means that Johnny is freed up from going to these meetings or supervising any of these personnel. For this arrangement to work the Business Manager and the Lead Pastor must be very close, able to work with one another on a trust basis.

B. By January 2010, hire a one half to full time person to do nothing direct the small group ministry, including Christ Care with the goal of 70% of the congregation being in a home based small group by Easter of 2013. This person would do well to read my book Going Big with Small Groups to compliment the Christ Care ministry (some of which I actually helped write).

C. By Sept. 2011, hire a full-time person in the field of evangelism to insure that 15 first time families are present each Sunday and that 75% of them join each year.

D. You may be asking “How do we pay for all of this?”

You have money in the bank you could use immediately for parking. From what I gathered you have enough in the bank to do 100 parking spaces. Keep in mind you are going to continue growing so you will have more people to help pay for things along the way. In a normal economy a church with your budget can borrow between 2 and 3 million and you can raise between 2 and 3 million over three years. However, in today’s economy I would be wise to limit yourself to only 2.5 more million bringing your debt to no more than 3.5 million.

III. In the Fall 2009, Begin Training Staff to Function as Scouts Rather Than Doers.

At the moment you have some 1400 or more people who come to church each month and there is no way your staff can know more than 700 of them. That’s because you are so understaffed. This puts a lot of pressure on the staff because

they have to keep so many ministries going and don't have time to recruit and train volunteers.

The primary paradigm shift today in the area of church staff is the movement from staff doing ministry to staff equipping others to do ministry. Instead of going to work thinking about what one must do, staff goes to work dreaming about who they might meet, transform, and mentor. Instead of trying to get a ministry done or a task performed, staff look for new people to mentor, equip, and send out into ministry. The shift is from doing to finding.

Staff must ask,

NOT "WHAT MUST I DO TODAY?", BUT "WHO WILL I MENTOR TODAY?"
NOT "WHAT IS MY JOB?", BUT "WHO WILL I DISCOVER?"
NOT "HOW MUCH CAN I DO?", BUT "HOW MANY OTHERS CAN I EQUIP?"

IV. Restructure by January 2010.

I seldom see a UMC that has both Council on Ministries and Administrative Board. Most churches have combined them by now. The 1996 Discipline allows you to do that and greatly reduce the number of committees and the amount of times they have to meet each month. I encourage you to read the section of the Discipline that spells this out and restructure so you don't spend as much time in meetings. At your size you spend a lot of money and time in meetings.

When it comes to the size of the board you have two choices. You can have a very small board of less than 11 people. This size board can strategize and make timely decisions. Or you can have a large board like you have now and about all it can do is rubber stamp ideas or vote them down. It is too large to do anything strategic or timely.

You might want to get any one of John Carver's books on church governance to see one of the most powerful options.

V. Once You Have Added the Staffed Consider Becoming a Multi-site Church.

Multisite churches are one church in more than one location – same board, same budget, and same staff. They will most likely become a norm over the next 25 years because it allows a church like yours to keep all your options open. You can be a church in more than one location or you can cut the new location loose and let it become a stand-alone church, or in time you can totally move to the new location.

Those members living in the area could move to the new location if they choose to do so. Doing this will allow you to continue to reach and change Greenville and stay on this property without hanging out no vacancy sign when you totally fill up this

property.

VI. Before the end of the year redo your Mission Statement.

A Mission Statement is very short. As Peter Drucker said, "If you can get your Mission Statement on a T-shirt, it probably is a good one."

- A. Your mission statement is too long, too uncertain and formal.
- B. My suggestion is you change it to "Committed to Sharing the Good News."

Should you decide to totally redo the mission statement, my book *Unfreezing Moves* can give you guidance on how to achieve this in a timely manner.

VII. Assorted but Important Recommendations

- A. Allow the youth to have a room totally their own. Although they youth didn't say they needed this it usually is important to a youth ministry.
- B. Sunday School classes need to get the phone number or email of all first time visitors and respond to them that week .
- C. Develop a % of monthly giving over a three year period. Establish a cash income flow chart for the past three years. Determine the average percentage of income for each month of the year over the past three years. This will allow you to compare this month to the average of the same month for the last three years. This way, you know after the first quarter of the year how you are going to be at the end of the year if you do nothing new. Using this method, you can compare your quarterly income to the normal giving patterns instead of comparing the income to 12 equal monthly streams of income. Money never comes into a church in 12 equal amounts. If you use a monthly percentage based on past experiences, you can determine ahead of time how much can be spent each quarter. This way, you can avoid over and under spending of the income. If at the end of the first quarter you should have received 19.8% of your income and you have received 18.9%, you know you are 1% short for the first quarter and probably the same will hold true for the rest of the year, making you a total of 4% short for the year. The same is true if you are 1% over at the end of the first quarter. It is not good to have money left over at the end of the year if vital ministries were curtailed out of fear of not having enough income. More money will usually come in during the month of December than any other month. You should plan for it.

Conclusion

Many members of St. James gave a great amount of time and energy to make this report a reality. Between 40 and 60 hours went into just collating the material used in preparing the final report, not including the time people spent answering questionnaires. Everyone cooperated extremely well. The pastor was exceptionally helpful. I want to

thank each of you who filled out forms, answered questions, attended the meetings, and agreed to be part of the on-site interview process. The ball is now in your court. You must soon determine what to do with this final report. May God richly bless you as you seek to find ways to faithfully serve God in the 21st century!

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